

'Leave me alone!'

Michael hits back in Moonwalker - the movie Hollywood calls 'Jackson's Revenge'

WHAT'S the truth about Michael Jackson?

Why does he want the Elephant Man's bones? Is he a walking testament to the art of the plastic surgeon? Does he have a shrine to Elizabeth Taylor at his Hollywood mansion and does he want to sleep in a hyperbaric chamber so he can live forever?

Jackson isn't saying but in his new \$25 million movie *Moonwalker* he puts those bizarre stories in the open and pleads with the world press: "Leave me alone."

The movie has Jackson, 29, singing, dancing and playing the hero, a mix of Rambo, Robocop and a Disney character, and in it his message is loud and clear.

In Hollywood they're calling *Moonwalker* (now screening in Australia) Jackson's *Revenge* because in one of the key segments Jackson, tongue very definitely in cheek, confronts the stories that have made headlines around the world.

The movie even has a scene in

which Michael does a jig and dance with bones meant to be those of the Elephant Man, the deformed but sensitive English circus freak who died at the turn of the century and whose bones are kept in a London hospital. Last year Michael tried, unsuccessfully, to buy those bones.

While the screen is filled with weird images of stories written about Jackson, he is pursued by a group of dogs, depicting TV newsmen and reporters, as he plaintively wails: "Leave me alone — just stop dogging me."

For five years Michael Jackson has refused all interviews. If he has anything to say he leaves it to his friend and manager Frank DiLeo to tell what's true and what isn't.

And on the eve of the film's opening DiLeo sat down in his Hollywood office to talk about his only client and answer questions about the eccentric superstar.

"It's not in his nature to do interviews. So much trash has been written about Michael and, nine times out of 10, if he does an



interview, he's misquoted," complains DiLeo, a 110kg former record promoter who took over Jackson's career five years ago.

He now charts every move, every concert, every step in the life of the biggest-selling star in the business.

"Leave Me Alone is my favorite song," says DiLeo. "It was an opportunity to say things because there's so much trash written. The movie is a good way to just address it, rather than use it negatively. We try to do things in a positive way."

The film has several storylines, including one featuring 13-year-old Sean Lennon, son of Yoko Ono and John Lennon, in his movie debut.

Says DiLeo: "It's Michael's way of going through life — and showing people not all the things written and said about him are true.

"Why do these people write this stuff, or choose to write this stuff? I don't think he views himself as being a circus ride. I view him as being a human being who is a public person. We try to have some privacy; you can only have so much because you've chosen to be a public person and you have to take the good with the bad."

So what about those stories?

"Michael Jackson has never had

ABOVE: Michael Jackson in a scene from his new \$25 million movie *Moonwalker*.

RIGHT: A rock legend and the son of a rock legend . . . Jackson and Sean Lennon.

an Elizabeth Taylor shrine in his house. They wanna believe it, let 'em believe it."

What about the hyperbaric chamber Jackson wants to sleep in and maybe live forever?

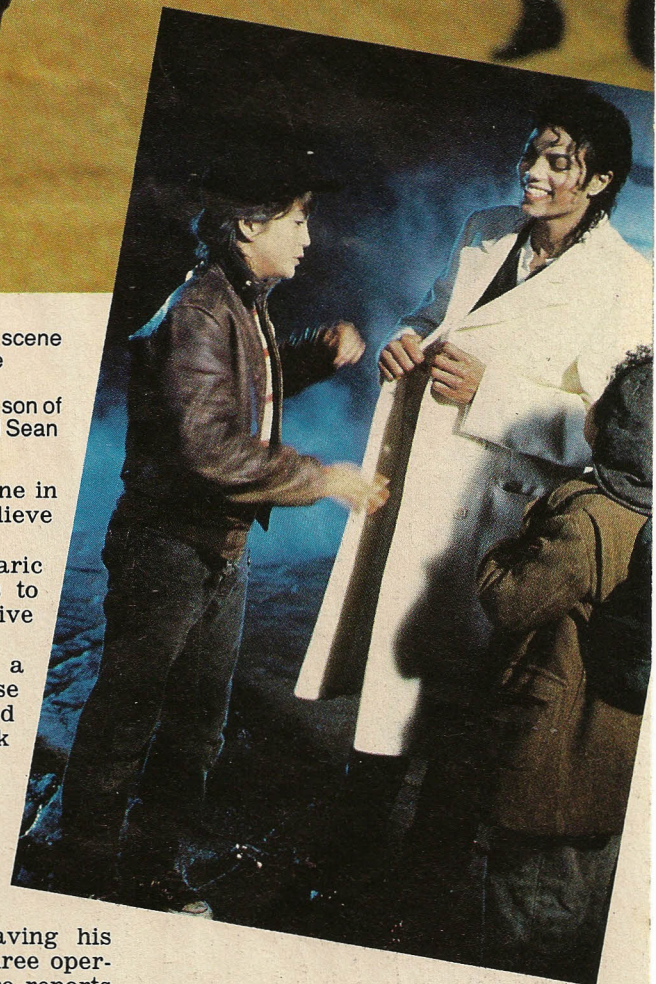
"Yes, he does have a chamber. Is he going to use it? At one time he wanted to use it. I was able to talk him out of it.

"And those bones? Why not — if you can afford it and bring it to America to show people? But it got blown all out of proportion."

Michael admits to having his nose fixed and having three operations, although there are reports he has had up to a dozen operations.

"Millions of people try self-improvement," DiLeo says. "It's a way of life here.

"But he's done a lot by diet. He doesn't eat fish or meat or chicken and a lot of the junk food he did



when he was a kid. He's like a lot of people. When they want something that will make them feel or look better, they go out and buy it. Michael is happy when he looks in the mirror."

From Ivor Davis in Los Angeles